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REPORTS

OF

COMMITTEES,

ON THE

PETITIONS

OF SUNDRY

REFUGEES

FROM

Canada and Nova-Scotia.

12th December 1796,
Committed to a committee of the whole House, on Thursday next.

PUBLISHED by ORDER of the HOUSE of REPRESENTATIVES.

Gilman 4 Jan 16 to 25
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19th February 1793,

Referred to a committee of the whole House, on Saturday next.

28th January 1796,

Referred to Mr. Gilman,
Mr. Hathorn, and
Mr. Preston.

15th February 1796,

Reported on.

17th Februury, 1796,

Committed to a committee of the whole House, on Monday next.

REPORT on the petition of John Blake, Joseph Bindon, John D. Mercier and Benjamin Thompson, Canadian refugees.

The COMMITTEE *to whom was referred the petition of John Blake, Joseph Bindon, John D. Mercier and Benjamin Thompson, in behalf of themselves and others, Canadian refugees,*

REPORT—

THAT the prayer of the petitioners is, that compensation be made to them for their loss of property and sufferings in the cause of American liberty.

In detailing the reasons in justification and support of their application, they alledge that, "in consequence of their espousal of the American cause, they were driven to the necessity of flying from Canada, and of taking refuge within these United States, and that finding themselves at the close of the late American war, in very distressed circumstances, especially as they seemed precluded from all hope of returning to Canada, to recover their property and effects, no notice having been taken of their interests, nor any provision made for them in the treaties of peace between the United States and Great-

Britain, they did, in behalf of themſelves and others, refugees from Canada, in the month of April 1783, preſent a memorial to Congreſs, praying that honorable body to take their unhappy caſe into conſideration, and to grant them ſuch relief as ſhould be deemed juſt and proper.—That accordingly, on the 23d of the ſame month, Congreſs were pleaſed to paſs ſeveral reſolves in their favour, to which they beg to refer, and which they were then given to underſtand, fully included themſelves and their fellow-ſufferers.—That, with unlimited faith in the juſtice of Congreſs, and ſatisfied with the aſſurances given to them by the reſolves before referred to, they have patiently waited the convenience of the public to fulfil the promiſed relief, 'till the preſent day." The reſolutions of Congreſs of the 23d of April, are in the following words, viz.

"That the memorialiſts be informed that Congreſs retain a lively ſenſe of the ſervices the Canadian officers and men have rendered the United States, and that they are ſeriouſly diſpoſed to reward them for their virtuous ſufferings in the cauſe of liberty.

"That they be further informed, that whenever Congreſs can conſiſtently make grants of land, they will reward, in this way, as far as may be conſiſtent, the officers, men and other refugees from Canada."

Theſe reſolutions unequivocally acknowledge the meritorious ſervices and ſufferings of that deſcription of men whoſe caſe is referred, and contain a promiſe that they ſhall be rewarded by grants of land, whenever it may conſiſtently be done. Although there may not exiſt a doubt of the merit of thoſe in whoſe favour the petition has been made, and of the juſtice of their claim upon the United States for the ſtipulated retribution, yet the reſolutions above recited, and the petition itſelf, which directly refers to them, neither render it proper, nor indeed leave the committee at liberty to report in favour of a compenſation in any other ſpecies of property than lands. Under this impreſſion and reſtriction, the committee have ſought for that kind of information which might as far as poſſible, enable them to form a

right judgment as to the number of acres, and the ſituation and value of the land which ought to be ſet apart for that purpoſe, or at leaſt what value in ſpecie ſhould be eſtabliſhed as the meaſure of the donation. In this enquiry, they confeſs that they have not received as full ſatisfaction as they had hoped for from the undertaking. Altho' eſtimates of the actual loſſes and ſacrifices of ſome individuals have been made out and laid before the committee, they are however ſo few in number, and bear ſo ſmall a proportion to the whole, that they afford no ſatisfactory rule by which a tolerably accurate deciſion may be made as to the aggregate of the loſſes ſuſtained. From the beſt information which the committee have obtained, there appear to have been about 229 refuges from Canada (ſome with and others without families) 22 of whom are ſuggeſted to have been the principal ſufferers, and the reſt to be ſufferers in a ſmall degree. Of both deſcriptions, ſome, as has been ſuggeſted, and is believed, have been already compenſated, either wholly or in part, and not a few returned to Canada, both before and ſince the peace, to poſſeſs their property or to purſue their buſineſs; neither the names nor numbers of whom have been exactly aſcertained. It appears from returns, the originals of which are in the war office, that 292 men, women and children, were victualled at Albany and Fiſhkill, from the public ſtores in 1784, and that in the following year, rations were drawn for 93 only. It alſo appears from another voucher in the ſame office, that 205 were returned for, and entitled to lands in the ſtate of New-York, purſuant to an act of the legiſlature thereof, of the 11th of May 1784. In this ſtate of uncertainty, not only as to the extent of the loſſes or ſufferings of the Canadian refugees, but as to the number of thoſe who remain uncompenſated, or whoſe compenſation was inadequate, it is not eaſy for the committee to decide with ſatisfactory preciſion, what ſpecie value the lands to be diſtributed among them, ſhould bear; and ſtill more difficult to aſcertain the number of acres which

ought to be allotted to them, becauſe this muſt altogether depend upon their goodneſs and ſituation. Having thus acknowledged the inſufficiency of the materials upon which they are to found an important part of their report, they propoſe, with a diffidence which ariſes from that circumſtance, the following reſolutions, viz.

Reſolved, That proviſion ought to be made by law, for donations of land to the Canadian refugees, in conformity with the reſolutions of Congreſs, of the 23d of April 1783, promiſing the ſame.

Reſolved, That the lands, ſo as aforeſaid to be given, ought not to exceed in their ſpecie value, at a reaſonable eſtimate, the ſum of dollars.

1ſt of April 1794,

Committed to a committe of the whole Houſe, on Thurſday next.

17th February 1796,

Committed to a committee of the whole Houſe, on Monday next.

REPORT on the petitions of Thomas and Edward Faulkner, Simeon Cheſter, and William Lawrence, refugees from Nova-Scotia; and of Joſeph Green, and others, refugees from Canada.

The COMMITTEE *to whom was referred the report of the Secretary of War, on the petitions of Thomas Faulkner, Edward Faulkner and Simeon Cheſter, refugees from the Britiſh province of Nova-Scotia; Joſeph Green, Preſque Trepagne, Auguſtine Trepagne, and Gregoire Trahan, Mary, the widow of Francois des Jardins, and Francois Rabutaille, refugees from the province of Canada;—and alſo, on the petition of William Lawrence, from the ſaid province of Nova-Scotia,*

REPORT—

THAT your committee have examined the reſolution of Congreſs, of the 23d of April 1783, on the memorial of brigadier general Hazen, promiſing,

that " whenever Congreſs can conſiſtently make grants of land, they will reward in this way, as far as may be conſiſtent, the officers, men, and others, refugees from Canada," as recited by the Secretary in his report, but which does not apply to the petitioners from that province; who, as they ſet forth in their petition, do not claim as refugees, but for ſervices rendered in Canada, by the orders of general Schuyler and col. Livingſton, for which they ſay they were promiſed pay, and ſome a bounty in lands. From all the enquiry your committee could make, they cannot find, that thoſe officers had any authority to promiſe a bounty in lands, to be paid by the United States to the petitioners; nor are there returns or vouchers filed, by which the pay claimed can be aſcertained.

Your committee alſo find a reſolution of Congreſs, of the 13th of April 1785, (which has been omitted by the Secretary) in the following words, viz. " *Reſolved*, That Jonathan Eddy, and other refugees from Nova-Scotia, on account of their attachment to the intereſt of the United States, be recommended to the humanity and particular attention of the ſeveral ſtates in which they reſpectively reſide, and that they be informed, that whenever Congreſs can, conſiſtently, make grants of land, they will reward, in this way, as far as may be conſiſtent, ſuch refugees from Nova-Scotia, as may be diſpoſed to live in the weſtern country."

That the petitioners, Thomas Faulkner, Edward Faulkner and Simeon Cheſter, were inſerted in the liſt returned by the ſaid Jonathan Eddy, as refugees from the Britiſh province of Nova-Scotia, and had abandoned their property there, on account of their attachment to the cauſe of America. That William Lawrence has produced ſufficient proof, that he is alſo a refugee from the ſaid province, and has abandoned his property there, from the ſame cauſe.

That in the ordinance paſſed by Congreſs, the 20th day of May 1785, it is ordained, " That three townſhips adjacent to lake Erie, be reſerved, to be hereafter

diſpoſed of by Congreſs, for the uſe of the officers, men and others, refugees from Canada, and the refugees from Nova-Scotia, who are or may be entitled to grants of land under reſolutions of Congreſs now exiſting, or which may hereafter be made reſpecting them, and for ſuch other purpoſes as Congreſs may hereafter direct."

From the expoſed ſituation of thoſe townſhips, a grant there, at preſent, would afford but little relief to the petitioners; but, from the beſt information the committee could obtain, the United States poſſeſs no lands adjacent to lake Erie, which they can now grant or diſpoſe of.

On conſideration whereof, your committee ſubmit the following reſolutions:

Reſolved, That the prayer of the petitioners Joſeph Green and others, from Canada, praying a bounty in lands and other pay, for ſervices rendered in the late war with Great-Britain, ought not to be granted.

Reſolved, That a tract of land, not exceeding acres, be laid off north-weſt of the Ohio river, beginning at the mouth of the Great Miama, and extending down the Ohio, not exceeding three times the breadth in length, be immediately appropriated to compenſate the refugees from the Britiſh provinces of Canada and Nova-Scotia, purſuant to the reſolves of Congreſs of the 23d of April 1783, and the 13th of April 1785.

Reſolved, That each refugee be entitled to five hundred acres of land.

Reſolved, That the following conditions and reſtrictions ought to be obſerved, to entitle the applicants to a grant of lands:

1ſt. That the applicant ſhall make proof, before ſome court of record, of his actual reſidence in one of the provinces aforeſaid, previous to the day of

2d. That he was compelled to abandon his reſidence aforeſaid, in conſequence of his attachment to the American cauſe.

3d. That all ſuch applications be made and lodged with the Secretary for the department of war, within years.

15th February 1796,

Ordered to lie on the table.

17th February 1796,

Referred, together with the reports of the 19th February 1793, and the 1st of April 1794, to a committee of the whole House, on Monday next.

REPORT on the report of a committee, made the 19th of February 1793, to whom was referred the petition of John Blake, Joseph Bindon, John D. Mercier and Benjamin Thompson, Canadian refugees.

The COMMITTEE, *to whom was referred the petition of sundry Canadian refugees, beg leave to present to the view of the House, the report of a committee to whom the said petition was referred, made February 19th* 1793, *which has not been decided on; and, with a view to the preservation of consistency in the decisions of the House on subjects of a similar nature, and that* equal justice *may be extended to all who have claims against the government,*

REPORT—

AS their opinion, that the petition, with the papers accompanying it, should be referred to the Committee of Claims.